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SUBJECT: TFH01: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH THE FIRST FAMILY

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Ambassador hosted an August 9 lunch with First Lady Xiomara Castro de Zelaya and members of the First Family. They believed that reconciliation among the Liberal Party would be very difficult, and they viewed it as unlikely that Elvin Santos would be able to recover ground before the November elections. The family remained gracious for U.S. support during difficult personal times. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador stated the U.S. position and briefed the family on the upcoming visit of the OAS foreign ministers. He expressed his view that it was important for all parties to be heard, and that there be a quick return to the negotiating table in San Jose.

¶3. (C) Given the statements by the de facto regime regarding the OAS mission, the First Lady said that the de facto regime was attempting to discredit the OAS and Secretary General Insulza. She believed the de facto regime would turn to European countries to observe the November elections.

¶4. (C) The First Lady said Elvin Santos would not be able to recover the support of would-be Liberal party voters due to the fact that he did not condemn the coup or strongly support the return of President Zelaya. She said it was not in the political interest of her husband to support Santos. She noted Santos had the support of many Liberal Party elites but, in her view, the base had abandoned him.

¶5. (C) The family seemed to harbor more resentment toward Elvin Santos than toward de facto regime president Roberto Micheletti. President Zelaya's mother noted that in the primaries, she had voted for Elvin Santos, but that everyone else in the family had voted for Micheletti. The First Lady and her daughters agreed, that they had supported Micheletti, because "at least you knew where he stood."

¶6. (C) In another example of the close dynamics between the families, the daughter of President Zelaya (Zoe Melara Zelaya) told a story about how 4-year old granddaughter Irene asked when Micheletti had "gone bad" and whispered her idea that "Grandpa should escape when Micheletti is reading the newspaper," (as if Zelaya was being held captive by Micheletti himself).

¶7. (C) The daughter pointed out that her father had always talked in general terms about the oligarchy and the flaws of

the political system, but she felt he never "personalized" any of these disputes. Her father's political opponents, on the other hand, did have strong personal animosities toward her father.

18. (C) Comment: Overall, the family seemed to be in good spirits. They did not call into question the U.S. position; and were appreciative of the personal support of the Embassy.

End Comment.

LLORENS